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Reading in English as a second language for Filipino students presents the Philippine schools with special problems. The sounds, rhythm, and intonation of English differ from the native Filipino language and so deeply ingrained language habits interfere with learning. The teacher is usually a second language speaker of English. And, there exists an inadequate oral language background which consists only of the language patterns taught in grades 1 and 2. The major problems of a Filipino pupil learning to read English arise from his inadequate control of the sounds and structures of the language, so the reading of English is not started until grade 3 when it is based on oral English skills taught in grades 1 and 2. Because of the need for using the student's oral language as a basis for developing reading materials, the Philippine Center for Language Study offers editorial and technical assistance to curriculum writers which will enable them to develop reading materials in English that are counterparts of the oral language lessons. A comparative analysis of the language structures in the basal readers and oral language materials will provide useful guidelines for evolving materials which will be more effective teaching the Filipino pupil to read English. References are included. (WB)

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A Comparative Structural Analysis of the Oral Language Materials and the Basic Readers Used in Philippine Schools

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Reading in English in Philippine Schools

In the Philippine public school system, English is the language of instruction from grade three through the university. The native language is used in the classroom in grades one and two, at the same time that pupils learn to read their native tongue. During these first two grades, systematic instruction in English as a second language is carried on largely through oral activities in the regular class period. Beginning reading in English is postponed until the latter part of grade two.

The pupil is introduced to reading in English with teacher-prepared materials. The teaching aids commonly used include flashcards, charts and chalkboards. Beginning reading materials are confined to the same dialogues, rhymes and stories previously mastered in the oral language lessons.

Formal book reading in English is begun only in grade three. By that time the pupil would have learned to read in his native tongue. All throughout the rest of the elementary grades, the child is taught reading both in English and in his native language.

Problems in Reading English as a Second Language

The pupil in grade one is ready to read his native language since he has spoken it all his life. He has acquired adequate oral experience so that he can associate the printed symbols with the sequences of sounds in speech. He can also recall the concepts which these printed forms represent.

The pupil's ability to read the Filipino language contributes to his readiness in reading English as far as physical preparation is concerned. Both the native language and English are written in the Roman alphabet. The Pilipino child does not have to learn a new set of characters like that of a Thai, Arab or Japanese learning to read English. Habits and skills which the Filipino child has acquired in reading his native language can easily be transferred to the process of reading English. The Filipino child has therefore acquired skills in eye movement from left to right and top to bottom, letter discrimination and recognition, etc. when he starts reading the second language. But the ability to read the native language can also be a great handicap in acquiring reading skills in English. The sounds of the letters in the Filipino language differ from those of the English alphabet. Each sound in the Filipino language is consistently represented by one letter symbol, which is not so in English. Almost all letters in English represent more than one sound and most sounds are represented by more than one letter or combination of letters.

Differences in the rhythm and intonation system of English and the Filipino language tend to create another difficulty. When the Filipino pupil reading English fails to observe correct phrasing and blending within thought units due to unnatural rhythm and intonation, the meaning of the passage is confused. This difficulty is compounded if the pupil reads unfamiliar words and sentence patterns which he has not heard or spoken before.

English is a second language to the Filipino child. He has to learn English under many limitations. The pupil has to cope with the interference of his own deeply ingrained native language habits as he acquires new ones. Unlike the child who grows up in an English-speaking environment, the Filipino learner will be exposed to the language for only two to three hours a day in school. He will have only one teacher of the language who is usually a second language speaker of English herself. This teacher, therefore, cannot be an authentic speech model for the pupils.

Compared to the first language speaker, the Filipino pupil begins to read English with a very inadequate oral background. Studies in language development have shown that an English speaking child is already proficient with "whatever sound system, grammar and vocabulary he has learned most frequehtly at home," (2) when he enters school. In other words, the English child has a complete control of the basic sounds and sentence patterns of his language at the age of six. On the other hand, the oral language repertoire of the Filipino pupil who begins reading in English will consist only of the language structures taught in his oral language program in grades one and two.

Oral Language as Basis for Reading

It is clear that the major problems of a Filipino pupil learning to read English arise from his inadequate control of the sounds and structures of the language. If the pupil begins to

read English materials which he has not acquired in his oral language, "he will likely transfer the sounds of his native language to the English text."(4) Studies in reading of bilingual children have shown that "if the sound system of their vernacular is transferred to English, meaning is confused." (4)

The difficulties in learning to read English as a second language stress the need for using the pupil's oral language as bases for developing his reading materials. If reading materials in English for Filipino pupils are written in words and sentence structures which are counterparts of the oral language lessons, comprehension is better. Pupils will be able to read with fluency. The process of reading will also reinforce mastery of the oral language.

The Philippine Center for Language Study English Guide Series

In the Philippine public schools, the curriculum materials used in the program of teaching English as a second language have been developed by curriculum writers of the Bureau of Public Schools with editorial and technical assistance of specialists in language teaching and linguistics from the Philippine Center for Language Study. The Center was established as part of the Philippine government - University of California Language Program with Rockefeller Foundation support to help in the solution of language problems in the Philippine educational system. These curriculum materials consist of teachers' guides, language textbooks and pupils' workbooks. These are authorized language texts in the elementary grades.

The linguistic and pedagogical soundness of the PCLS English Guides series have been recognized. Albert Marckwardt of the National Council of Teachers of English evaluates the materials:

We are now acquiring valuable experience in

> developing materials and training teachers of English as a second language throughout the world. One of our most notable efforts has been in the Philippines where the University of California, with Rockefeller Foundation support, has undertaken an ambitious program and has executed it ably. Elementary school textbooks have been developed, teachers have been trained....[1]

An evaluation report, "English Teaching on the Rim of Asia," also states that "the Center has to its credit an excellent six-volume series for the teaching of English in elementary schools."[2]

The Teachers' Guides in English consist essentially of subject-matter and methodology for effective teaching of English as a second language to Filipino children. (16) Each language lesson has been designed to provide the learner with highly-motivated language experiences focused towards mastery of specific language patterns at a time. The crux of the methodology is the control of language structure and vocabulary to insure intensive exposure to the language and faster pace of learning. The selection and sequence of language patterns included in the teaching guides were derived through a contrastive analysis of English and the Filipino language. This linguistic technique involved the alignment of the two linguistic systems on the three levels of sound, structure and vocabulary, in order to identify contrasts and to predict learning difficulties of Filipinos. (6) A hierarchy of difficulties was evolved which was the basis for

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[1]Albert Markwardt, "English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language," originally given as an address at the convention of Modern Language Association, Washington, D.C., December 29, 1962, Harold Allen, Editor, Teaching English as a Second Language (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), p. 6.

[2]James W. Ney, "English Teaching on the Rim of Asia," Language Learning, A Journal of Applied Linguistics, Vol. XIII, Nos. 3 & 4, p. 196.

the choice and cumulative sequencing of patterns to be taught in the language lessons.

Structural Control in Readers

Recent studies in linguistics and reading have shown that patterned groupings of words, not words in isolation alone, determine the degree of difficulty of reading materials. Word order is important to signal meaning. A change in the position of a word will alter the meaning of a sentence. For example, the lexical meanings of the words man, bites, dog are the same in the sentences Dog bites man and Man bites dog but the structural meanings are different. Also if the reader fails to see the structural relationships, he will fail to get the meaning expressed in the sentence The man was bitten by the dog or he will fail to relate the meaning to that of its deeper structure Dog bites man. Structure is a carrier of meaning as well as the individual words.

Structural control is an important consideration in developing beginning reading materials for Filipino children learning English as a second language. There should be a careful restriction of the kind and number of language structures to be used in the reading selections to suit the oral language competence of the readers at each particular level of language learning. The language structures should correspond closely to the structures taught in the oral language lessons. The systematic and gradual progression from simple to more complex patterns in the oral language materials should also be maintained. Oral language lessons begin with the simple, easy and useful patterns; therefore, beginning reading materials should also begin with these kinds of patterns. At the initial stage of learning to read, there should be rigid control of patterns. But as the pupil grows in his reading in the upper grades, control should necessarily be relaxed. Varied and complex patterns should be used in order to

cope with the widening interests of the child. Structural control in reading materials for second language teaching consists of the use of simple, familiar sentence patterns and their variations and expansions, gradual progression from simple to more complex structures and repetition of patterns in meaningful situations.

Structural control will ease the difficulty of learning to read a new language. The child will not be confronted with the additional problem of learning an unfamiliar sentence pattern in the process of recognizing and interpreting written symbols. The learner will experience success at the initial stage which should greatly influence his lifetime attitude towards reading.

Comparison of Language Structures in Readers and Oral Language Teaching Guides

A comparative analysis of the language structures in the basal readers and the oral language materials used in Philippine schools will provide useful guidelines for evolving more effective materials in teaching the Filipino pupil to read in English. This study will be so designed that language structures will be classified into three categories: namely, language structures used in both the oral language materials and the readers; language structures used in the oral language materials but not in the readers; language structures used in the readers but not in the oral language materials. The results of the study will also reveal whether there exists an identifiable sequence of development in the complexity of structures in the readers which is parallel to the sequence in the oral language materials. The degree of similarity in the kind and frequency of language structures in the readers and the oral language teaching guides will be indicative of the suitability of the reading materials to meet the oral competence of Filipino pupils at each grade level.

The procedure for the comparative structural analysis will be built on previous studies, particularly that of Strick-

land, Loban, Riling, Hunt, and O'Donnell. Strickland's study compared the structures used in the oral language of elementary school children with the structures employed in their reading textbooks. She reported that children used a great variety and complexity of language patterns which were not matched in their reading textbooks.(15) Ruddell made a follow-up study and confirmed the basic assumption of Strickland that comprehension is better if reading passages employ language structures frequently used in oral speech.(13) Loban's study also revealed that competence in the spoken language is a necessary base for competence in reading.(9)

The technique for structural analysis in this study will integrate devices derived from structural grammar and transformational-generative grammar. The communication unit used in Loban's study will be adopted as the unit of analysis. This unit is the same as that which Kellogg Hunt calls the "minimal terminable syntactic unit" or "T-unit." Hunt defines T-unit as one main clause and all the subordinate clauses attached to it. The T-unit is a complete sentence or the "shortest grammatically allowable sentence" into which the language can be segmented.(8)

The use of the T-unit, instead of the sentence as the unit of analysis is supported by recent linguistically-oriented studies. Hunt's study reported that difficulty to comprehend materials is related to the lengths of clauses not of sentences(8) A longer sentence consisting of strings of T-units joined by and's may be easier to comprehend than a shorter passage resulting from reduction of T-units into modifiers.

The first level of analysis is focused on the structural pattern of each T-unit. Each T-unit is segmented and classified into basic statement patterns and their derivations including interrogatives, passives, negations, imperatives, emphatic state-

ments and partials. This system of classification is based on the system used in the Philippine oral language teaching guides.(16)

The second level of analysis gives a more precise description of the complexity of the grammatical structure. It involves a transformational analysis of each unit by determining the kinds and number of sentence-combining transformations.

Sentence-combining transformations is the "process of producing one sentence where otherwise there would have been two." (11) One or more T-units or independent clauses are reduced into subordinate clauses or non-clause modifiers and consolidated into a single grammatically interrelated unit. O'Donnell illustrates how this grammatical process of reduction and consolidation results in the complexity of the sentence structure. Thus the independent clause or T-unit, The man was rich is embedded as a clause modifier in the base sentence, The man bought a car to produce the derived sentence The man who is rich bought a car. Or the clause who is rich is further reduced as a non-clausal modifier in the derived sentence, The rich man bought a car.

Sentence-combining transformations increase the difficulty of comprehending a passage. Although the style becomes more succinct, there may also be the danger of structural ambiguity for the reader. The consolidation of T-units reduces the number of words in the passage, but more ideas and thoughts are usually condensed into a single intricate grammatical structure. The reader usually finds the meaning of such single complex structure difficult to grasp.

In this study, the analysis will be focused towards those aspects of grammatical structure which are regarded as crucial for reading comprehension. The data to be compared are: 1. average number of words in T-units 2. average number of clauses in T-units 3. number of T-units in sentences 4. basic structural patterns 5. derived interrogatives, passives, negations, imperatives, emphatic statements and partials 6. kinds and number of sentence-combining transformations.

Value of Contrastive Analysis in Developing Second Language Readers

One significant implication of the results of this study is the importance of a contrastive analysis of the learner's native language and the second language to be learned as basis for evolving effective reading materials for second language learners. The contrastive analysis should give authors of reading textbooks useful insights into the problems which a pupil with a particular native language background meets in learning to read English. Writers of reading materials will be more aware of potential comprehension difficulties that can be traced to the nature of the pupil's native language. Writers will know which structures in English are easy and simple to a pupil because of similar structures in his native language and which structures are difficult because of contrasting structures in the first language. Reading textbooks can, therefore, be designed so that comprehension will be better by utilizing easy structures in beginning reading and gradually introducing more difficult patterns as pupils grow in reading competence.

The results of this study should yield data which will be useful in evolving a list of structures for the use of authors of reading textbooks in Philippine schools. This list will complement a similar vocabulary list specially derived for Filipino children on the bases of their cultural and linguistic background.

Readability in Second Language Teaching.

Reading progress is enhanced if pupils are taught to read using materials they can understand and enjoy. But if pupils use materials that are too difficult to understand they fail to acquire facility in reading. Their reading progress deteriorates, since they do not derive satisfaction in the process.

Writers must consider the particular group of pupils for whom they are writing in order to produce materials that can be

read with ease and pleasure. The content and style of the reading materials must be suited to the experiences, interests, linguistic ability, cultural background and stage of development of the intended readers.

The capacity to enjoy and understand fully a reading selection varies considerably among different groups of children. In other words, ease of comprehension and enjoyment in reading depend on both the quality of the material and the nature of the reader.

Readability formulas have been evolved to help authors determine the reading difficulty of their materials. This index of difficulty should then guide the teacher in choosing which particular group of pupils will be able to read materials of a given level of difficulty with facility and maximum understanding. But it is clear that these formulas are not valid in a second language situation. Textbooks with readability level of seven in an English-speaking environment will certainly not be of the same level if the readers are Filipino children.

So far, no readability formula exists which is applicable to second language materials. There is a dire need for scientific investigations designed to adapt measurements of readability to the needs of readers learning English as a second language.

Reading a Second Language as Challenging Field of Research

This study will attempt to define ways of improving reading materials in Philippine schools. But it is believed that its major significance will be the disclosure of the multifarious problems of learning to read English by second language speakers.

English is the medium in which millions of non-native English-speaking peoples in Asia, Europe, Africa and other parts of the world acquire their education. Most people in various nations of the world learn the latest advances in science, technology, arts, and culture only through the English language. Considering the important role of the language in our modern world,

better programs and materials in the teaching of reading English for second language learners will greatly contribute to world literacy and progress. Problems in the teaching of reading English to speakers of other languages is indeed a rich and challenging field for research scholars and reading specialists.

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